

The Human Touch

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and much more!

Director's Message



Lisa-Michele Church,
Executive Director

What is it that makes a person want to stand up for an underdog? I like to think it is that person's feeling that – in another time and place – the underdog could be him. DHS employees do an outstanding job of standing up for the underdog in a variety of settings. I appreciate all you do to represent those who don't often have a voice in public policy making.

This is never more apparent than during the legislative session. You and I know the needs are great in our communities and neighborhoods. And yet the legislature seems to focus on other priorities. It is more important than ever that we do our jobs carefully and responsibly to provide needed services to Utahns. Thank you for your commitment to those who don't always know how to get the help they deserve.

Whether it is a youth offender who doesn't understand the consequences of his actions, an elderly person who is trying to maintain her

dignity in the face of mounting health problems, or a child in foster care who just needs to know that someone will listen to them – we are out there every day standing up for them. It really is the cumulative effect of all the little things you do that changes lives for the better. Don't lose sight of that.

In our society obsessed with celebrity and glamour, it is not always easy to stand up for people who don't have the right clothes, the right parents or the right bank account. The message is equally harsh when our citizens hear that they need to fend for themselves and "stop relying on the government." The irony is that everyone needs some help at some time in their lives. Most of our public policymakers are in a position to help others because they received help at some time. I would hope that we remain committed to securing safe homes, nurturing families and positive outcomes for the Utahns that we serve.

Standing up for the underdog requires you to be unpopular and criticized. I know that DHS employees have plenty of experience with this and I admire you for standing your ground. Do not be discouraged if you sense a lack of public support. Remember that the very crises we are needed to solve make us controversial. We need you more than ever. I have found many legislators and public officials that are willing to support DHS efforts and I will continue to rally that support wherever I go. In the meantime, keep up the good work!



Starting New Lives

By Lisa Schauerhamer

// "I love helping," said Newton Gborway, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) caseworker.

Newton has a deep personal understanding of people needing help as they start a new life. He came from Nigeria, losing everything to begin a new life in America. He used his experience, skills and heart to build trust with the families that came to Utah, via Camp Williams after Katrina.

// "Newton could readily engage with the traumatized victims of this horrific event. He was very successful at helping set them at ease and get back on their feet," said LaRay Brown, DCFS Region Director.

The families from Katrina are adjusting to their new lives here in Utah with Newton's on-going support. "I feel I have built up a rapport with the families," he said. "They know they can call me if there are problems and I will mediate or help them through situations."

Newton has taken some of the children to the 'REAL' soccer games and he has been included in birthday celebrations. When a student misses school, the school lets him know and he is able to do a home visit and see if there are problems. "Teachers have been great helping the kids find friends and in general helping them adjust to the change. It has been a wonderful experience so far," Newton said.

What are the families saying about their first winter in Utah? Newton offered some examples.

// "We love it here. The snow is different than expected but the kids love to play in it."

-- "We are really pleased with the schools. I've sent for my older son to join us."

-- "The kids have adjusted really well. We are happy with the city and the people that talk to us."

"When I read about myself and what I have done, I feel happy for the work I have done with the people that have come here because of Katrina. I love helping," Newton said.

Thank you Newton. Helping is what DHS is all about!



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Payroll Information At Your Fingertips

By Jay Jensen

Changes are coming! Here's a new acronym to learn, ESS. Employee Self Serve (ESS) is in the early stages of implementation at the Department of Human Services (DHS). State employees can use this self-service function to view or change personal information such as tax withholding and direct deposit amounts. Employees also may enter their work time.



ESS has two parts:

"My information" allows employees to change their W-4 or change direct deposit amounts online without having to do the paperwork. It allows employees to view leave balances, past paychecks and view or print 2003 to current W-2s.

"Time Entry" is an online time sheet allowing employees to enter time into the system and have their supervisor electronically sign the time sheet so a paper copy won't be needed.

As with most other technological improvements, you may experience some bumps along the way but with a little patience and perseverance, it will save time.

Stay tuned! The Office of Human Resources will be training employees and implementing ESS over the next few months.



Announcing Open Nominations

The State of Utah Manager and Employee of the Year

Human Services has many, many excellent managers and employees! Let's tell the successful and impactful stories occurring each and every day through their efforts and services provided to Utah's citizens.

Nominate a DHS manager and/or employee for recognition.

Information and Instructions can be accessed at <http://www.dhrm.utah.gov/er/ety.html>.

We Need Investors; Not firefighters

By Eric Beidler, DCFS

It is very common to hear managers say they spend most of their time "putting out fires." Unfortunately, we run the risk of becoming full-time firefighters as more and more fires are allowed to overtake our main purpose; helping employees be successful.

Ironically, you may also be contributing to, if not starting, the very fires you are trying to put out by neglecting your workers. Having dissatisfied employees leads to turnover and both have a big impact on your team's ability to succeed.

Instead of being a firefighter, you could try thinking more like an investor....which is a notion of being proactive, rather than being reactive. As you invest in your employees, your return on that investment (ROI) should be much higher than when you invested it poorly (fire starter). What are some investments you can make despite the fires enveloping you daily?

Meet regularly with your employees to review their progress toward high quality service to clients and other performance plan goals. For some, this could be weekly. For others, quarterly is best. This avoids surprises and strengthens positive change and progress.

Create opportunities for team members to build trust in others. It is worth it for each to invest in the team's success.

Celebrate successes of individuals and the team, both personal and professional.

Increase ownership by inclusion of workers in decisions that affect their work. They are the experts and can bring depth to the decision-making.

Seek feedback about your performance from workers. They can tell you how you are doing and what they need. If this is awkward, keep trying. You will uncover things you can change along the way until they trust you enough to be more open. Ask workers, "What can I start, stop or continue doing to support your success in your job?" DCFS Director Richard Anderson has used this conversation starter for many years. The answers always result in a lot of information.

The key is to be an investor-manager and focus on the needs of your employees. The ROI is the likelihood that they will then all invest in the team's success. Also, if there is a bona fide fire to be handled, it won't be one that you contributed to and you'll have a whole team to help you.

Work Well!

By Manuel Romero & Donna Russell

//Increase employee's healthy living." That's a large order for us in the Department of Human Services. We often put our client's needs center stage and don't take good care of ourselves. Sometimes we skip a nutritious lunch or breakfast in favor of the ever-popular "junk food" with a statement to ourselves, "I'll do better tomorrow, right now I've got to get to a meeting."

//You are 'center stage' to the purpose of DHS," said Lisa-Michele Church, DHS Executive Director. "We are revitalizing the DHS Wellness Council to carry this message!"

Manuel Romero, the new chair is excited to lead the DHS Wellness Committee in the Administration Building. "Our goal is simple." He said, "We will work with employees to increase employee productivity and morale, decrease absenteeism, lower medical utilization rates and most importantly, increase our employee's efforts towards living healthy and productive lives."

The Council was formed at the encouragement of Governor Jon M. Huntsman's Work Well Recommendations and Support for the Healthy Utah Program.

Try This Challenge:

Do I hear you saying, "Well, that's for people in Salt Lake City, and nothing is happening here in my office?" We encourage you to discuss this conversation starter; "Imagine you are working in the healthiest workplace ever, what would it look or feel like? What would you see when you walk around the office?"

Then, pick one or two things and begin! See what happens! Let's share our stories and successes. Please write to us, Donna Russell, dlrussell@utah.gov or Manuel Romero, maromero@utah.gov. We can each begin to "Work Well!" and create positive changes. Best Wishes!

Thank you to the Wellness Council for taking the first steps. These people welcome your contact and questions. All can be reached through GroupWise.



Names left to right: George Etherington, Lisa Schauerhamer, Michelle Morris, Nicole Christiansen, Cathy Stromberg, Beverly MacFarlane, Manuel Romero, Paul Smith

Not pictured:
Scott Payne
Judy Morrison
Meredith Category
Richard Abbott
Craig Povey
Bonnie Athas
Jan Bohi

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

By Ron Roskos, Executive Director, BIAU

Every 23 seconds a brain injury occurs in the United States. Approximately 5.3 million Americans have a long-term or lifelong need for help to perform daily activities as a result of a traumatic brain injury.

The Brain Injury Association of Utah (BIAU) is working to create a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education and advocacy. The BIAU Web site www.biau.org provides resource and educational information. Additional information can be accessed through the Department of Human Services, Division of Services for People with Disabilities Web site www.dspd.utah.gov.

Governor Jon M. Huntsman will declare March as Brain Injury Awareness Month. The goal is to increase public awareness of the silent epidemic of traumatic brain injury in Utah. Preventing brain injuries will also be highlighted. The leading causes of traumatic brain injuries are: falls, motor-vehicle accidents, assaults and war injuries. Utah has experienced a 13% increase in TBI (Traumatic Brain Injuries) since 1999. This translates into almost 2,000 people and their families affected.

If you need more information contact the BIAU at 800/281-8442 or 801/484-2240.



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Staff Safety Honored

By Josette Harding

Utah State Developmental Center's (USDC) staff was honored for increased employee safety with the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Utah Division of Risk Management.

Karen Clarke, superintendent and Melissa Frost, liability prevention specialist, accepted the award during the December 13, 2005 State Risk Management Meeting. Clarke and Frost are quick to acknowledge achieving the recognition is the result of a combined effort by all staff.



Superintendent Karen Clarke receives award.

Recognition was specifically made of Superintendent Karen Clarke's instrumental leadership in making staff injury reduction a key project. "As an organization we were concerned for the safety and well being of our valuable Developmental Center staff. In February, 2004, we decided to set staff safety as a priority goal for our facility," Karen said, "We all worked closely together to identify areas where improvement could be made. We credit our USDC employees with the commitment toward making the Center a safe place to work." The result is occupational injuries were substantially reduced in the last two years. Additionally, these efforts resulted in saving the state thousands of dollars in claim reimbursements annually.

"We are very honored to be the first recipient of the Risk Management, 'Outstanding Achievement Award,' added Melissa. "We are so proud of the safety efforts from our employees who have reduced the number of Workers' Compensation claims by 49 in 2005."

Congratulations to all USDC staff.



DHS Recognition Council Selected

By Donna L. Russell

The first Recognition Council meeting was held January 23, 2006. Team members participated in a lively presentation by Scott Christopher, OC Tanner corporate trainer. His subject, "A Carrot A Day!" highlighted the importance and value of effective employee recognition.

Try This Challenge:

Come up with a fun tradition that you can start for your employees. Some managers recognize employee accomplishments with sets of walking teeth (walking the talk), others with handwritten cards. Whatever the tradition, keep it going and keep it fun!"

(Taken from A Carrot A Day, Gostick, Adrian and Elton, Chester, 2004)

Thanks to Council members who are enthusiastically joining together to strengthen employee recognition in our department!

